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Communist Party of the U.S. of America

Constitution of the Workers party of America...

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[1922]

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Oct 31, 1940

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

Workers Party of America

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As amended by the Second National Convention, New York City, December 24-25 and 26, 1922.

Article I.—Name and Purpose

Section 1.—The name of this organization shall be THE WORKERS PARTY OF AMERICA. Its purpose shall be to educate and organize the working class for the abolition of capitalism through the establishment of the Workers' Republic.

Article II.—Emblem

Section 1.—The emblem of the party shall be the crossed hammer and sickle with a circular margin having at the top, "Workers Party of America," and underneath, "Workers of the World, Unite."

Article III.—Membership

Section 1.—Every person who accepts the principles and tactics of the Workers Party of America and agrees to submit to its discipline and engage actively in its work shall be eligible to membership.

Section 2.—Applicants for membership shall sign an application card reading as follows:

"The undersigned declares his adherence to the principles and tactics of the Workers Party of America as expressed in its program and constitution and agrees to submit to the discipline of the party and to engage actively in its work."

Section 3.—Every member shall join a duly constituted branch of the party if such exists in the territory where he lives. Appli-

cants living in territories where the Workers Party of America has no organized branch may become members at large.

Section 4.—All applicants for membership must be endorsed and recommended by two persons who have been members for not less than three months. An applicant must be present in person when his application is acted upon.

Section 5.—Applications for membership shall not be acted upon finally until one month after presentation. In the meantime the applicant shall pay initiation fees and dues and shall attend all meetings. This rule shall not apply to charter members of new branches nor to those who make application to the newly organized branches during the first month.

Section 6.—It shall be the duty of the District Organizers—party and industrial and the D. E. C's to see that all members eligible for union membership shall join the craft, industrial and occupational unions of their calling if such exists in the District provided that this can be done without working undue hardships on members.

Article IV.—Units of Organization

Section 1.—The basic units of organization of the Workers Party of America shall be:

a) The Branch, to consist of not less than five members.

b) Members-at-large, who shall be connected with the nearest district organization.

c) Such special forms of local organization as may be authorized by the Central Executive Committee.

Section 2—Two or more branches in the same city shall form a City Central Committee. The City Central Committee may also include branches in adjacent territory.

Section 3.—The Central Executive Committee is empowered to designate the boundaries of the district organizations (which may include more than one state or parts of states), such boundaries to be fixed with regard to economic rather than state divisions. For the purpose of carrying on parliamentary activity, the City Central Committees and branches in any state shall constitute the state organization. The entire supervision of this activity shall be assigned by the Central Executive Committee to the district organization best equipped for the purpose.

Article V.—Administration

Section 1.—The supreme body of the Workers Party of America shall be the Convention of the Party.

Section 2.—Between conventions the Central Executive Committee elected by the convention shall be the supreme body of the Party and shall direct all the activities of the Party.

Section 3.—The administrative power of the district shall be vested in the Annual District Convention.

Section 4.—Between District Conventions the administrative powers of the district shall be vested in the District Committee elected by the District Convention. District organizers appointed by the Central Executive Committee shall be members of the District Committee and carry on their work under its supervision.

Section 5.—The City Central Committee shall consist of delegates elected by the branches. Every branch shall have at least one delegate. The City Central Committee shall meet at least twice a month. The City Central Committee shall elect a secretary, executive committee and such other officers as may be found necessary. The District Executive Committee reserves the right of approval of secretary.

Article VI—Conventions

Section 1.—The Convention is the supreme body of the Party, and shall be called by the Central Executive Committee at least once a year.

Section 2.—Emergency conventions, with all the powers of regular conventions, may be called by the Central Executive Committee or upon demand of District Organizations representing 40 per cent of the membership.

Section 3.—The number of delegates to the National Convention shall be determined by the Central Executive Committee. Delegates shall be apportioned to the districts according to membership based upon average dues paid for the period of four months prior to call for the convention. The districts shall apportion the number to be elected by city conventions on the same basis.

Section 4.—Delegates to the national convention shall be elected by district conventions. Branches in organized cities shall elect delegates to the district conventions. The number

of delegates to which each branch is entitled shall be decided by the City Central Committee according to membership as above. When there is no city central organization the branch shall elect delegates directly to the district convention.

Section 5.—City and district secretaries and organizers shall attend the conventions of their respective units and shall have a voice but no vote unless elected as delegates themselves.

Section 6.—City and district conventions may elect as their delegates members of the Party from units outside their territorial divisions.

Section 7.—At the same time that the call for the convention is issued the Central Executive Committee shall submit to every branch for the discussion the Agenda and other propositions that are to come before the convention. At least sixty days before the Convention the Party Press shall be opened for discussion of important Party matters. District Committees may submit propositions to be included in the Agenda.

Section 8.—Delegates to the National Convention shall be paid railroad expenses and a certain amount per diem to be determined by the Central Executive Committee.

Article VII.—Central Executive Committee

Section 1.—Between Conventions the Central Executive Committee shall be the supreme body of the Party and shall direct all its activities.

Section 2.—The Central Executive Committee shall consist of twenty-five members; twenty-four shall be elected by the convention and the N.E.C. of the Y. W. L. shall elect one member. The Central Executive Committee shall elect an Executive Council of eleven members from among its number which shall carry on the work of the Party with all the powers of the C. E. C. between sessions of the full committee.

Section 3.—The Central Executive Committee shall elect the Executive Secretary and Chairman of the Party, and all other officers.

Section 4.—The Central Executive Committee shall appoint District Organizers and all national officials. It shall create subcommittees for the proper direction of its activities.

Section 5.—The Central Executive Committee shall make a monthly report of the Party activities and Party finances.

Section 6.—The Central Executive Committee shall divide the country into districts in accordance with Article IV, Section 3, provided that the boundary lines of the districts shall not be changed within a period of four months prior to the national convention.

Section 7.—A complete audit and accounting of all Party funds shall be made every six months.

Section 8.—All press and propaganda activities shall be under the full control of the Central Executive Committee.

Article VIII.—District and Subordinate Units

Section 1.—The Central Executive Committee shall appoint District Organizers for each district.

Section 2.—Every district organizer shall make complete reports to the District Executive Committee as to the general Party work in his district. He shall submit and carry out the instructions and decisions of the Central Executive Committee. He shall make remittance and financial statements regularly to the Central Executive Committee and shall also submit financial statements to the membership in his district at least once a month.

Section 3.—District Conventions shall be held before the National Convention. The District Convention shall elect six members of the District Executive Committee.

Section 4.—These six members, together with the District Organizer, who shall be a member of the District Executive Committee with voice and vote, shall supervise the activities of the district and shall regularly submit the minutes of their meetings to the Central Executive Committee. All actions of the District Committee are subject to review by the Central Executive Committee.

Section 5.—The District Executive Committee shall determine the boundaries of the city locals.

Section 6.—The City Central Committee shall consist of delegates representing branches in accordance with their relative membership. Each branch shall be represented by at least one delegate. The City Central Committee shall have super-

vision of all activities in the local and shall make regular reports of its work to the District Executive Committee.

Section 7.—The City Central Committee shall elect a city executive committee, consisting of from 5 to 7 members, which shall act for the City Central Committee between meetings.

Section 8.—The Branch shall consist of members, as provided in Article III, Section 1. It shall elect an executive committee, branch organizer. delegates to the City Central Committee, and such other officers as may be considered necessary.

Article IX.—Language Sections

Section 1.—Members speaking a common language other than English may organize into a "Language Branch."

Section 2.—Language branches of the same language may be formed into a Language section, subject to the approval of the Central Executive Committee.

~~Section 2.—Language branches of the same language, with an aggregate membership of at least 400, shall be formed into a Language Section.~~ There shall be only one section in each language, and all language branches must affiliate with their respective language sections.

Section 3.—All language branches shall be integral parts of the party structure in their localities, and shall perform and carry out all Party functions and obligations.

Section 4.—Shortly after Party Conventions, national language conferences shall be held. These conferences shall formulate plans for education and propaganda in their respective languages, subject to the approval of the Central Executive Committee. All actions of these conferences shall be in strict conformity with the decisions of the Party Convention and the Central Executive Committee. Expenses of these conferences shall be borne bv the language sections.

Section 5.—The language section conference shall elect a bureau to administer its affairs and a suitable number of alternates. The bureau shall elect the editors and officers and shall supervise all activities of their respective language sections, subject to the approval of the Central Executive Committee.

Section 6.—The Central Executive Committee shall have the right to disapprove the members elected by the conference to

the language bureaus and fill such vacancies from among the alternates.

Section 7.—The Central Executive Committee may appoint a fraternal member to every language section executive committee with voice but no vote.

Section 8.—The bureau shall have the right to appoint district language section organizers subject to the approval of the Central Executive Committee. All organizers shall work under the supervision of the Party District Organizers in the various districts.

Section 9a)—National Language Bureaus shall translate and transmit all statements, circulars and communications addressed to the membership by the Central Executive Committee within one week after their receipt.

Section 9b)—Language branches shall purchase their due stamps directly from their nationl bureau, which shall purchase due stamps from the Central Executive Committee at 30 cents each, and sell same to its branches at a price determined by the Language Section conference. The branches to sell due stamps to members at 50 cents. The National Office shall remit to the district organization ten cents, and to the city locals five cents for each stamp sold to language sections.

Section 9c)—The National Language Bureau shall account to the Central Executive Committee regularly for all funds entrusted to it and shall make regular financial reports to the Central Executive Committee regarding all the institutions under its control. Its accounts shall be subject to the audit of the Central Executive Committee. Special assessments may be levied by the National Language Bureaus on the membership with the approval of the Central Executive Committee.

Section 10a)—Language Bureaus and Language Sections shall have no power to suspend, expel or reorganize affiliations. All disciplinary powers are vested exclusively in the regular Party organization machinery.

10b)—Language Bureaus and Sections may recommend such suspension, expulsion or reorganization to the party units having jurisdiction.

Section 11.—The Language Bureaus shall be composed of the following subcommittees: Editorial, propaganda and edu-

cational, industrial and finance. The bureau secretary shall be ex-officio member of all sub-committees.

Article X.—Discipline.

Section 1.—All decisions of the governing bodies of the Party shall be binding upon the membership and subordinate units of the organization.

Section 2.—Any member or organization violating the decitions of the Party shall be subject to suspension or expulsion by the organization which has jurisdiction. Charges against members shall be made before branches, subject to appeal by either side to the City Central Committee or to the District Executive Committee, where there is no city organization. Charges against a branch shall be made before the City Central Committee or before the District Executive Committee where there is no city organization. Decisions of the City Central Committee in the case of branches shall be subject to revision by the district organization. Charges against state or district organization shall be made before the Central Executive Committee.

Section 3.—Each unit of the Party shall restrict its activities to the territory it represents.

Section 4.—A member who desires to transfer his membership to another branch shall have a transfer card from the financial secretary or organizer of his branch. No branch shall receive a member from another branch without such transfer card and upon presentation of the card the secretary of the branch receiving same shall make inquiries about the standing of the member of the secretary issuing the card.

Section 5.—All party units shall use uniform application cards, dues books and accounting records, which shall be printed by the National Organization.

Section 6.—Any suspended or removed member of the Central Executive Committee shall have the right to appeal in writing or in person to the next National Party Convention.

Article XI.—Dues

Section 1.—Each applicant for membership shall pay initiation fees of fifty cents which shall be receipted for by an ini-

tiation stamp furnished by the Central Executive Committee. The entire sum shall go to the National Organization.

Section 2.—Each member shall pay fifty cents per month in due stamps, which shall be sold to the state or district organizations at 25 cents. State or District Organizations shall sell stamps to the City Central Committee and to the branches where there is no city central committee at 35 cents. The City Central Committee shall sell stamps to branches at 40 cents.

Section 3.—Special assessment may be levied by the National Convention or Central Executive Committee. No member shall be considered in good standing unless he purchases such special assessment stamps. The D E C shall be allowed to levy assessments only upon authority of the C E C.

Section 4.—Husband and wife belonging to the same branch may purchase dual stamps, which shall be sold at the same price as the regular stamps. Special assessments must be paid by both husband and wife.

Section 5.—Members unable to pay dues on account of unemployment, strikes, sickness or for similar reasons shall upon application to their financial secretary be furnished with exempt stamps. Provided that no state or district organizations shall be allowed exempt stamps in a proportion greater than ten per cent of its monthly purchases of regular stamps.

Section 6.—Members who are three months in arrears in payment of their dues shall cease to be members of the Party in good standing. Members who are six months in arrears shall be stricken from the rolls. No member shall pay dues in advance for a period of more than three months.

Article XII.—Headquarters

Section 1.—The National Headquarters of the Party shall be located in the city designated by the Convention.

Article XIII.—Qualifications

Section 1.—Members of the Central Executive Committee, Executive Secretary, Editor, and all candidates for political office, must have been (a) members of the party for two years at the time of their nomination, or (b) members of a charter

organization, or members of any organization affiliating as a body within sixty days after the first convention.

Section 2.—One year's membership in the Party shall be necessary to qualify for membership on the District Executive Committee; six months for city central delegates and officers, three months in the branch) for branch officers. This section shall not apply to branch officers or city central delegates of new branches.

Article XIV.—Relationship with the Young Workers League

In order to effectively cement the relationship of the Young Workers League and the Workers Party, the following steps are necessary:

1. All Party units shall actively assist the Y. W. L. in all general activities, and especially in demonstrations of the Youth, such as Internationl Youth Day, Liebknecht Day, etc., and in inaugurating and supporting special demands of the young workers on both the economic and political field.

2. Party officials and membership shall take the initiative in organizing Y. W. L. branches where none exist, and assist in strengthening the already existing ones. In case of necessity Party members shall be assigned for this work during the period of organization of Y. W. L. units.

3. (a) All Party members under 21 years of age must become members of the Y. W. L., immediately and devote the major part of their time to League activities.

(b) All Party members from 21 to 23 years of age are urged to join the Y. W. L. and become active in its work.

(c) By mutual agreement between the corresponding Party and League committees, any member under 30 years of age—within the jurisdiction of such committees—may be assigned in the case of urgency to either Party or League work. In case of disagreement, the next higher committees of corresponding Party and League units shall decide as to the asssignment of members in such special cases.

4. (a) There shall be mutual and equal representation with voice and vote on all committees from the Branch up to and including the C. E. C. of the Party and N. E. C. of the League.

(b) There shall be similar representation with voice and vote, on all sub-committees, such as Educational, Industrial, etc.

(c) The representatives of the Y. W. L. on Party committees shall be the organizers or secretaries of the corresponding League committees, or a regular member of the corresponding League committee. The representatives of the W. P. on League committees shall be the organizers or secretaries of the corresponding Party committees, or a regular member of the corresponding Party committee.

(d) The representative of the Y. W. L. on the C. E. C. of the W. P., and the alternate member, shall be elected by the N. E. C. of the Y. W. L. from among the members of the N. E. C.

The Party representative on the N. E. C. of the Y. W. L., and the alternate member, shall be elected by the C. E. C. of the W. P. from among the members of the C. E. C.

(e) There shall be mutual and equal representation, with voice and vote, on all Federation Bureaus of the Party and National Propaganda Committees of the League.

The Party representatives on the N. P. C's of the League shall be elected by the Party Language Bureaus from among the members of the Party Bureaus.

The League representatives on the Federation Bureaus of the W. P. shall be elected by the N. P. C's of the League from among the members of the N. P. C.

5. (a) Regular delegates, with voice and vote, to all Party Conferences and Conventions shall be allotted to the League.

(b) The number of delegates of the League to the National Convention of the Party shall be determined by the C. E. C. of the W. P.

(c) The Party committees, having jurisdiction, shall determine the number of League delegates to District Conventions, City Conventions.

(d) The number of Y. W. L. delegates to Party Conventions and Conferences shall be not less than three nor more than five.

(e) The number of Party delegates to corresponding League Conventions shall be the same as the number of League delegates to Party Conventions, and elected by the corresponding Party Committees.

(f) The League delegates to Party Conventions and Conferences shall be elected by the League committees having jurisdiction.

(g) Similar mutual and equal representation shall be given to the League to all other Party Conventions and Conferences, and vice versa, and shall be determined by the committees having jurisdiction or calling same.

6. The representative of the Party on League committees and vice versa, shall make regular reports to corresponding committees on the policies and general activities. Minutes shall be exchanged.

7. Y. W. L. members shall be members of the regular Party nuclei in the shops and unions, with all privileges and duties of W. P. members.

8. Definite space in the Party press shall be allotted to the League and, wherever possible, Youth Sections and Supplements shall be carried. Material for same shall be furnished by or with the approval of the N. E. C. of the Y. W. L.

Party editors are istructed to carry this provision into effect immediately. They shall also supply articles on the youth movement, and particularly point out to the Party membership the importance of interesting themselves and supporting this movement.

9. Y. W. L. members under 21 years of age, who are also members of the W. P., shall be exempt from the payment of the Party dues and assessments upon presentation of their membership card to the Party branch, showing dues paid for the particular month to the Y. W. L.

An exempt stamp with notation "Y. W. L. Member" shall be attached to the Party membership card of such members.

10. The Party officials, committees and membership are instructed to put the foregoing provisions into effect immediately.

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